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OL. 134
No. 1

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

2009 YEC nets hundreds of decisions

Tony Martin
Associate Editor

"I've never seen anything like it," was a comment shared by one student minister – a sentiment echoed by many others participating in the 2009 Youth Evangelism Challenge (YEC) December 28-29, 2009.

The annual event, held at the A.E. Wood Coliseum on the campus of Mississippi College, Clinton, attracted an approximate 1600 students and leaders from around the state. The event is sponsored by the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; Don Lum is the director. The YEC is facilitated by a committee made up of Shannon Slover, First Church, Laurel; Brad Van Cleave, First Church, Magee; Eric Bean, Wade Church, Moss Point; Kenny Walters, Northcrest Church, Meridian; and Brandon Lewis, First Church, Oxford.

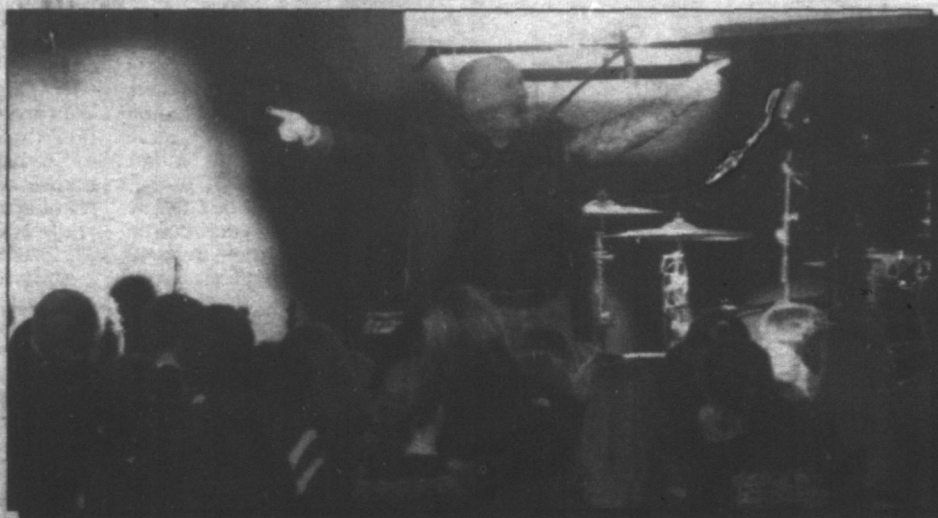
Program leaders included Danny Lanier, pastor of Northcrest Church, Meridian; Sammy Nuckolls, Olive Branch; and Hank Hough, who has a ministry called Kingdom Dog, from Spring, Tex. Soulstice, from Summerville, S.C., was the worship band.

The most unique presentation was from Hough and his Labrador retrievers.

"Every speaker talked about how what Hank did led into what they did. He set the tone for what the speakers were doing," said Lum.

Lum said that he had first seen Hough on YouTube, and from that viewing he made contact with Hough. Hough came to First Church, Magee, to do a wild game dinner, and Lum and Hough spent some time together. From that experience, Lum invited Hough to lead during the YEC.

Using his two well-trained dogs, Hough drew several parallels to how the training and behavior of his dogs mirrors



DRAWING THE NET – Danny Lanier, pastor, Northcrest Church, Meridian, is shown giving the invitation during the Monday afternoons session of the Youth Evangelism

our relationship with Christ. After putting one of his dogs through some intricate behaviors, he said, "Know how I know this dog is mine? He trusts and obeys me." During other demonstrations, Hough said noted that "the dog knows his master's voice and only responds to it." At one point, Hough had a "bumper," a hard rubber toy, placed in the highest level of the coliseum. With voice and whistle commands, his dog was able to locate it. "His job is just to go find that which is lost," said Hough.

"Our goal from the beginning was to grab the students' attention, and Hank was able to do that," Lum said. "Then when Danny Lanier got up to speak, they were ready to listen. Danny literally did what God had ordained Danny to do, and that was to draw the net."

Lanier preached at the afternoon session of the event, following Hough, and in an astonishing movement of God, an estimated 400 students came forward during the invitation to make decisions for Christ. "When he started honing in and beginning his invitation, the kids were quiet and attentive," said Lum. "The kids just kept coming during the invitation. What's unique about YEC is that every kid came with a leader, a pastor, a youth minister or chaperone, who could not only deal with them there but could follow up after they got home. We met with counselors twice so that they could be trained in follow-up. We had professions of faith, rededications, calls to ministry and missions. It was something."

Lum stated that the event was an evangelism conference, not a Bible conference. "First thing we try to do is challenge students with the gospel, and that they will confronted with the claims of Jesus Christ. Then we will challenge them, helping them to understand they are going back to their homes and their

schools, and that God wants them to be the light that God uses to touch their worlds."

Leaders and students were uniformly positive about the event. Lill Johnson, youth leader from First Church, Foxworth, said it was her first experience with YEC.

"We've heard about it every year," she said, "and this was our first year to come. We've done winter retreats before, but decided to do this."

Whitney Armstrong, an 11th grader from the same church, said, "We usually do a lot over the holidays – a Christmas party, a winter retreat in January, but we're glad we did this."

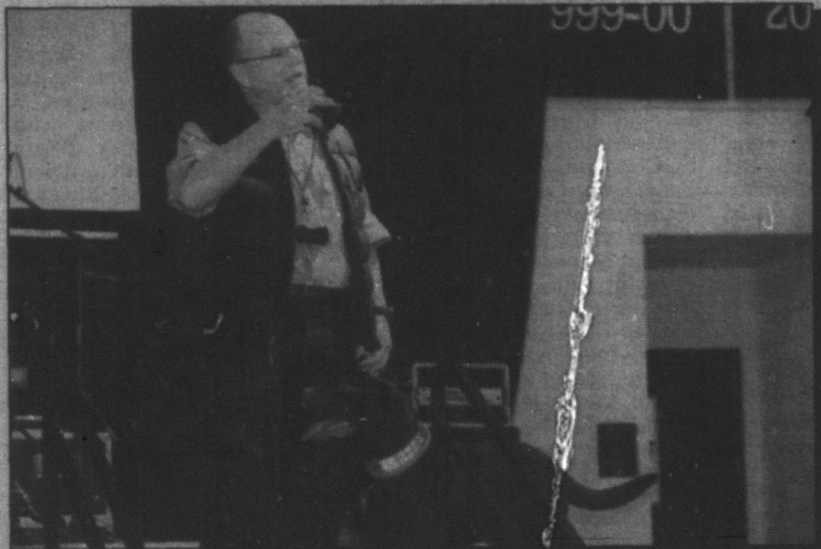
While several students wryly noted that they were just glad to get out of the house, others were open to God working in their lives. "It's a lot of fun," said Evan Valentine, a 10th grader from Rock Hill Church, Brandon. "The music, everything is really good. This is my third time to come."

Jake Niblett, youth leader from Rock Hill, agreed. "I just want to see change," he said. "Several kids in our group need salvation – I want them to see that there's something different out there from what they're used to."

"Church is there every week," said Lum. "If you are really going to do youth ministry, you have to do some special events. You have to take them places, to get them out of the norm. They may hear the same message, but in a different format. They need that."

"When I was in youth ministry, I always enjoyed taking my kids to Gatlinburg and places like that, but I didn't enjoy that 10-hour drive home. I enjoyed the YEC because of the cost at Christmastime, but I also enjoyed having something close by – a quality event where they can get what they need."

Lum noted that the YEC would be impossible without gifts to the Cooperative Program. The 2010 YEC will be held Dec. 27-28 on the MC campus.



KINGDOM DOG – Hank Hough, from Spring, Tex., is seen with one of his Labrador retrievers. Hough uses dogs to illustrate truths of the Christian life. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Scholars disagree on end time doctrines

GRAPEVINE, Texas (BP)—When it comes to the end of time, at least one thing is certain: Southern Baptists have a variety of opinions. And according to leading Baptist theologians, nearly all of those opinions fall within the bounds of orthodoxy.

"On the whole Baptists have been model kingdom citizens when agreeing on the essentials of a doctrine of last things without attempting to press one another unrelentingly on the particular details," wrote Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in the book "Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in America's Largest Protestant Denomination."

Patterson explained that the committee charged in 2000 with revising the Southern Baptist Convention's confession of faith articulated the Bible's core teachings on last things — also known as eschatology — without mentioning the secondary details on which inerrantists disagree.

Theologians have divided on such issues as what happens to believers between their deaths and Christ's second coming, the nature of the resurrection body and the number of resurrections to occur.

"Frankly, I find some Christian eschatological interpretations embarrassing," guest lecturer Craig Evans of Acadia Divinity School said during a discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "There are some pulpits, TV evangelists, and popular writers who think they've got this all figured out."

When asked his interpretation of Bible prophecy from references to the armies of Belial, armies of Satan, and a mention of Magog, Evans said, "I just say to be cautious about that because we don't always know what's going on. Some of this is metaphorical, poetic and so forth, and to bring a scientific precision to it and pigeonhole everything — I think that's a very questionable approach."

The only views that qualify as unorthodox are those that deny a future coming of Christ, Russell D. Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the theology school at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said.

"Any view that does not hold to a future day of what the church has called 'the resurrection of the flesh' is outside the bounds of Christian orthodoxy," Moore said. "Christians have and will continue to disagree about whether some of the events of Matthew 25 or Mark 13 or the book of Revelation were fulfilled at the fall of Jerusalem. That can be a disagreement among brothers."

THE MILLENNIUM

Among Southern Baptists, differences of opinion arise on the nature of the millennium

referenced in Revelation 20. That passage describes a 1,000-year period, known as the millennium, during which Satan is bound. Disagreement occurs regarding the timing of Christ's return relative to the millennium and whether the number 1,000 is literal or symbolic.

Premillennialists believe Christ will return prior to a literal 1,000-year period.

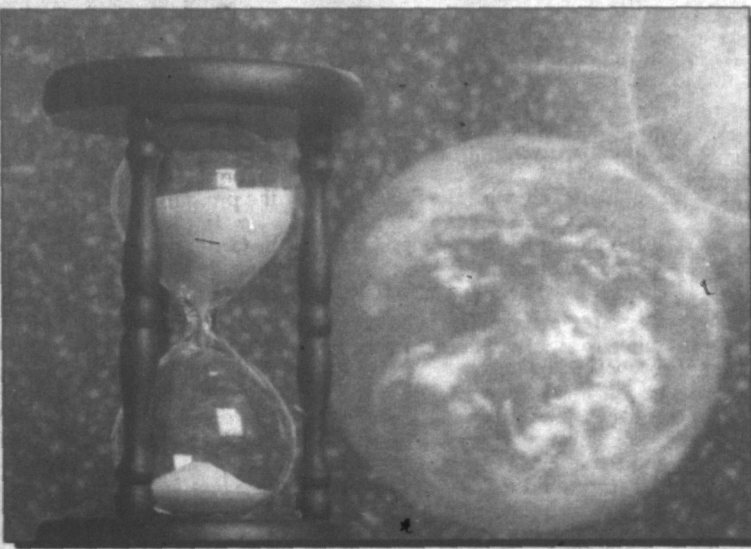
Among premillennialists, there are varied opinions on whether Jesus will remove Christians from the earth prior to a tribulation preceding His return. Some, known as dispensational premillennialists or dispensationalists, believe in such a rescue for Christians. Others, known as historic premillennialists, believe Christians will not be taken out of the world until Jesus returns. A minority of premillennialists believe Christians will be raptured halfway through a period of tribulation preceding Christ's return.

Postmillennialists believe the 1,000-year period will occur before Jesus returns. Adherents of this position generally believe the millennium will be a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity under the lordship of Christ. Although postmillennialism has enjoyed proponents such as Jonathan Edwards and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary founder B.H. Carroll, the view faded from Baptist life in the last century.

Amillennialists believe the number 1,000 is figurative and that we are currently in the millennium (some premillennialists and postmillennialists also believe 1,000 is figurative). They argue that Satan was bound by Christ through His finished work at the cross and has limited power until Christ returns. Thus, the millennium refers to the current era when Christ reigns in the hearts of believers without Satan's interference. Christ's return will mark the close of this era, amillennialists believe.

By the mid-20th century, dispensationalism and amillennialism appeared to be hopelessly at odds in the SBC and the larger evangelical world. But a movement led by Baptist theologians Carl F.H. Henry and George Eldon Ladd brought the two poles together.

Henry and Ladd argued that both groups got something wrong. Dispensationalists, they said, viewed the Kingdom of God as entirely a future reality to be established during the millennium. On the other hand, amillennialists, who often fell in the Reformed tradition of



WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING TO HAPPEN? — While orthodox Southern Baptist scholars may disagree on details, virtually all do agree on the fundamental truth of the future return of Christ.

"covenant theology," argued that the Kingdom was entirely a present spiritual reality.

So Henry "combined the 'already' kingdom emphasis of the covenant theologians with the 'not yet' kingdom expectancy of the dispensationalists," explains Moore in his book "The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective." The resulting view, known as inaugurated eschatology, argued that the Kingdom is already present as Christ reigns spiritually in the hearts of believers but is also a future reality in which He will reign over the physical universe perfectly and eternally.

Because of Henry and Ladd, evangelicals who disagree on minor details of eschatology now agree on the overall "already-not yet" framework of God's Kingdom, Moore writes.

"In a reaffirmation of the Protestant principle of sola Scriptura, covenantalists and dispensationalists have reexamined their respective systems in the light of biblical theology, and have come to strikingly similar conclusions," he writes. "Thus, the topic of eschatology no longer serves to threaten the evangelical coalition, but actually may contribute to its doctrinal cohesion."

One position to emerge from the new consensus developed by Henry and Ladd is progressive dispensationalism. Developed in

the late 20th century, this position agrees with older varieties of dispensationalism that God divided history into different eras and that there will be a secret rapture of the church prior to a period of tribulation on earth. However, progressive dispensationalists disagree with classic dispensationalists' assertion that God has different plans of redemption for Israel on the one hand and the church on the other.

Craig Blaising, executive vice president and provost at Southwestern Seminary, coauthored with New Testament scholar Darrell Bock a pioneering book on progressive dispensationalism.

"The appearance of the church does not signal a secondary redemption plan, either to be fulfilled in heaven apart from the new earth or in an elite class of Jews and Gentiles who are forever distinguished from the rest of redeemed humanity," Blaising writes in "Progressive Dispensationalism." "Instead, the church today is a revelation of spiritual blessings which all the redeemed will share in spite of their ethnic and national differences."

David Roach is a correspondent for the Southern Baptist TEXAN, newjournal of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, on the Web at texanonline.net.

Looking back

10 years ago

The 1999 Youth Evangelism Conference Dec. 31 sees 29 professions of faith out of 36 decisions.

20 years ago

Clarke College in Newton, now a division of Mississippi College in Clinton, is placed on academic probation for the second year. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recommends strengthening the school in two areas: long-range planning and increased financing.

50 years ago

Mississippi Baptists are asked to give \$100,000 in a special offering Feb. 21 for the purpose of renovating Gulfshore Assembly for use beginning in the coming year.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

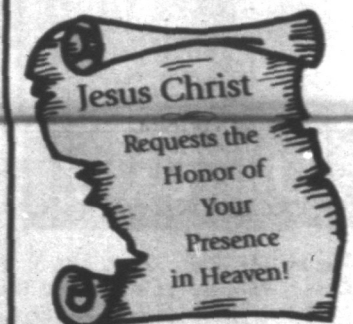
THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

JANUARY 7, 2010

VOL. 134

No. 1



YOU CAN RESPOND
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Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



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VOLUME 134 • NUMBER 1

(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per
year payable in advance. Economy plans
available for cooperating Mississippi churches.
Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS.
Member, Association of State Baptist Papers.
Deadlines: News items — one calendar
week prior to requested publication date.
Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to
requested publication date. All submissions
are subject to editing.

Dear Legislator ...

The 2010 session of the Mississippi Legislature is revving up to full speed, as proposed legislation moves to committees and will soon be coming up on a series of deadlines.

As anyone knows who even casually tracks the annual three-month sessions of the Legislature, many bills are introduced but relatively few make it into law. The complex set of checks and balances both inside the legislative process and in the broader branches of state government have a tendency to winnow the hundreds and hundreds of bills that are filed and pre-filed for each session.

Legislators have to absorb their share of criticism, cynicism, and caricature during their time under the hoary domes of the New Capitol in downtown Jackson. Some of the ridicule showered on them is likely deserved (by some of them, anyway), but a fair amount is not deserved.

They are, after all, our fellow Mississippians. For every citizen who couldn't find their way to either chamber in the Capitol but feels free to regularly slam legislators, there are at least a few of us who realize that most legislators are well-meaning people who must put aside their families, businesses, and community activities for one-quarter of each year to come to Jackson for the session.

That's no small sacrifice, so it would behoove us to occasionally tell them how

much we appreciate the effort even as we loudly complain about what we perceive they are doing or not doing.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC) has some helpful hints on how to make contact with legislators, how to get a point across without dooming favored legislation, and how to follow up on the progress of important measures:

- **The best communicating is done face-to-face.** Make an appointment and be on time. Bring an outline of the one or two main issues you want to discuss. Be brief, recommend specific solutions, and leave a written summary of your important points.

- **It's fair to ask the legislator for his/her position on the bills in which you are interested.** Don't take it personally if the legislator disagrees. Rather than argue, discuss differences in a pleasant manner.

- **If a personal visit is not possible, write your legislator.** Writing can save a legislator's time (a plus in your favor) and provides a record of your position on proposed legislation. Include your full name, address, and telephone number. The address for legislators while in session is P.O. Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39215-1018.

- **Individual e-mail addresses can be accessed at www.ls.state.ms.us.**

- **Do your research.** Know the bills about which you are writing, and include any specific information you have such as the bill number and details. Bill status can be attained by calling (601) 359-3719 while the legislature is in session, or by going to www.ls.state.ms.us.

- **Telephone calls do not substitute for personal visits and letters.** When telephoning legislators, however, make efficient use of your time with them. Identify yourself and the bills you are for or against (again, one or two main issues is a good limit). Explain your reasoning and let them know how you want them to vote.

- **The telephone number for legislators while they are in session is (601) 359-3770.** Just as with personal visits and letters, end the conversation by expressing your thanks for their time.

- **Citizens can request to testify before committees about bills they strongly support or oppose.** Find out the name of the appropriate committee chairman and contact him/her as soon as possible. If given the opportunity to testify, get to the point quickly and be prepared to answer any questions legislators may have about your position.

The CAC, a ministry funded by the Mississippi Cooperative Program, stands ready to assist Mississippi Baptists who want to get involved in this grand process of self-governance we enjoy in our state and nation. They can be reached at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. Fax: (601) 292-3350. E-mail: rmccollum@christianaction.com.

Take the time to get involved, or else just be content with whatever comes out of the legislative pipeline. Those are really our only two choices.

GUEST OPINION:

A decade in which God moved

By Erich Bridges



Ten years ago this month, many people were wondering if the world would end with the beginning of the new millennium.

It didn't happen, although in light of subsequent events, some might wish it had. TIME magazine recently dubbed 2000-2009 "The Decade from Hell" — a "10-year gauntlet" of trials and tribulations. A partial list:

- the Sept. 11 attacks, which ended any lingering hope of a peaceful post-Cold War world.
- innumerable smaller terrorist attacks from Madrid to Mumbai.
- wars and insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Congo, Yemen, ~~9~~ Lanka, Somalia and many other places.
- earthquakes that killed tens of thousands in China, Iran and Pakistan.
- a tsunami that swept away more than 200,000 people in Asia and Africa.

As if those events weren't devastating enough, a major economic downturn beginning in 2008 continues to cause untold hardships across the globe for hundreds of millions of workers and their families.

In a struggle that captured far fewer headlines, many Christian believers died for their faith during the decade — including eight Southern Baptist missionaries. Countless other followers of Christ have suffered violence, imprisonment, harassment and other forms of persecution for living and sharing their faith.

Would it have been better if the last 10 years had never occurred? To answer yes is to misunderstand God's sovereignty. If He is the Lord of all history, He is the Lord of recent history. He uses all things, even tragedies and actions others intend for evil, to bless the nations and bring glory to Himself.

In a December 1999 column, I observed:

"The tumultuous 20th staggers to an end this month.... Historians will recall many things about it: two world wars, the fall of old empires and rise of new ones, the devastation wrought by communism and totalitarianism, the Holocaust, the spread of democracy and capitalism, man on the moon, the computer, the Bomb...."

"...the fresh movement of God's Spirit is the real story of the century. How else to explain the staggering growth of the church, the Gospel's spread to countless places worldwide — not just in the

West — and the glorifying of God's name among peoples who've never heard it until now? God isn't finished with us.... His Spirit is quietly, inexorably, powerfully moving — like a vast, unseen river."

God is still moving. After the great tsunami and the Pakistan quake, whole communities and regions previously cut off from the Gospel experienced the love of Christ through relief and rebuilding efforts initiated by Christians. Military conflicts have opened spiritual doors as churches and mission workers aided suffering populations and refugees. The lives of believers who remained faithful under persecution have changed history among the people they love and serve.

Ten years ago, Rasheed* didn't know Jesus Christ as Lord. Today he is one of the leaders of a growing movement of Muslim-background followers of Christ in India. But he's paid the price for his new commitment. As I write this, he is recovering from a

broken rib and other injuries — the result of the latest (and worst) beating he has suffered at the hands of people angered by his stand for Jesus.

He remains too weak to talk much, but one of his friends related what happened:

"Rasheed shared with a couple of Muslim men who both became [believers in Christ.] One of them went home and told his family. The men in the family gathered others from the community, and six of them found Rasheed and angrily asked him questions about what he had taught this new believer. As Rasheed attempted to explain, they began to beat him. One of the men pushed him down, and he hit his head on a pile of bricks as he fell. Another continued to beat him with a cricket bat until other villagers stopped the beating and took Rasheed to his brother."

Rasheed is learning what the earliest disciples discovered in similar times: It isn't easy to be a real follower of Christ. It's hard. It costs everything — especially when you're one of the first to commit yourself to Him.

But one day, Rasheed and the many souls he is leading to Christ will look back on "The Decade from Hell" as the moment when they found the way to heaven.

Names changed for security reasons. Erich Bridges is global correspondent for the International Mission Board (imb.org).

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. Vaiden Church, Vaiden: Revival, Jan. 10 - 13; Ken Freeman and John Yates, leaders; for information, call (662) 464-5275 or visit www.vaidenbaptist.com.

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COLLEGE NEWS



1. MC singers

1. Carnegie Hall's historic Isaac Stern Auditorium is the venue this time with the award-winning Mississippi College Singers preparing for a Jan. 19 concert appearance in New York City. The 55-member MC group directed by MC Music Department Chairman James Meaders will perform Rene Clausen's "Memorial." Tickets for the 8 p.m. performance range between \$20 and \$100.

2. Twenty-nine students were accepted into the new William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine as of early December and interviews continue for the beginning of classes in Fall 2010. Of the 29 ages range from 21 to 50, and the students come from throughout the south, including Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

3. Christian fiction writers from around the South will gather at Blue Mountain College Jan. 19-20 to discuss their art and meet with students and friends of the school. Six authors will take part in a public Meet the Authors Night discussion at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 19 in the Guyton Library on the

BMC campus. They will also visit students and faculty on Tuesday and Wednesday, and some will travel to area libraries for programs. All are members of the American Christian Fiction Writers organization.

4. Leaders from Mississippi Baptist churches marking major milestones will gather for a Feb. 6 workshop on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton. Speakers will include: MC history professor Kirk Ford, retired MC administrator Ed McMillan, and retired professor Richard Ethridge of East Central Community College. McMillan serves as executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission, the event sponsor. The Feb. 6 event at Anderson Hall of the B.C. Rogers Student Center begins with registration at 9 a.m. and wraps up around 2:45 p.m. The deadline for reservations is Monday Feb 1.

Visit us online at www.mbc.org

STAFF CHANGES

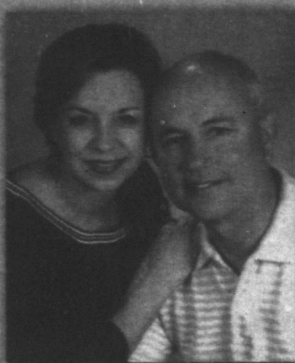
1. Tippah/Benton Association welcomes Jerry Bingham as Associational Missions Director. Bingham and his wife Carol come from Pine Grove Church, Benton County.



J. Bingham

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FX JTD MFJZDK ZD T
MEFSC GZQB RFGAO
TDC KOATQ KEFON.

ESIA QGADQN-FDA:
QGADQN-WAPAD

Clue: E = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error.

OBITUARY

Henry Joe Bennett, 92, died Dec. 11 in Greenwood. Visitation was 5-7 p.m. Dec. at Wright & Ferguson, High Street, Jackson, with memorial service at Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson, Dec. 16. He graduated from Bruce High School, Mississippi College, and received degrees from New Orleans Seminary. He served churches in Mississippi and Louisiana and pastored Byram Church, Byram, for 38 years. After retirement there, he served as pastor at Calvary Church, Braxton, and Terry Road Church, Jackson. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Ileta Bratton Bennett; sons, Benny Bennett, Atlanta, Ga., and Joel Bennett, Brandon; daughters, Nay Reed, Greenwood, and Rockie Netherland, Pensacola, Fla.; brothers, James Albert Bennett, Pearl, and Bill Bennett, Joseph City, Ariz.; ten grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

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WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Here we are in a brand new decade — Welcome to 2010. We make a big deal out of a New Year's beginning with streamers, songs, balls dropping, peaches dropping, and fireworks popping. We fill the moment with excitement and emotion. We make it appear as though it is bigger than it is. In fact, if you did not have a calendar or if you did not hear or see the news, you probably would not know January 1 was any different from any other day. The sun will come up, the weather will probably be cold, life will have its general array of problems and challenges, and we will press on. However, it is probably good that we have a new calendar to remind us that the cycle has begun again and that the New Year can hold new possibilities and just well may be filled with new potential. That leads me to ask you a question or maybe ask myself a question. Where am I going this year? Where are you going?

The Wise Men, who followed the star that led them to where Jesus was, brought their gifts, worshipped Him, and turned to go home. Herod had instructed them to come and tell him when they found the baby, this newborn king, but the Bible says, "They being warned by God went home another way" (Matt. 2:12). They did not follow in the direction back to Herod.

At this time of the year that experience can be quite provoking because this can be for every one of us a time of turning, a time of returning to life a different way, taking a different turn, having a different attitude, and seeking to follow the Lord in new and more committed ways. We can get off track. You can take detours. You can go where you do not need to be going.

Some years ago, I was visiting a national monument and followed a sidewalk that went down from or around about the memorial only to run into a park ranger who said to me, "Where are you going?" I said, "I really don't know. I was just coming to



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

see what was down this path." He said, "Well, you are not supposed to be down here." I said, "Well, there wasn't a sign (and there wasn't). There was no indication that I was not supposed to be down there." He said, "Well, I know, but you are not supposed to be down here." Well obviously, I did not stay down there, and I did what he told me to do. I turned around and went in another direction. That is a good thing about the New Year. Each of us can have clear directions, plans, and instructions on where we are supposed to go.

When I ask the question, where are you going, I would like to encourage you to answer by saying, I am going to begin with the Bible. The Psalmist said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Commit to read your Bible every day, and day by day, you will be able to say that same glorious truth. You will find that light will shine on the path of life like never before if you will listen to what God says. The Word of God is an ancient book, but it is relevant and meaningful to the needs, decisions, and celebrations of this very day.

Some weeks ago, I heard about a man who had come to Christ in a predominantly non-Christian culture. A missionary had led him to the Lord, and it was a transforming and joyous experience. As so often happens, this young, new believer dove into the things of God and could not get enough of the Word of God. He took his Bible to work, and at lunch or break times, he would find a place off by himself, open his Bible, and just begin to devour more of the Word. Some of his friends watching this activity day after day finally gathered around him and said, "Why do you read that book all of the

time?" He was shocked and said, "You mean my Bible?" They said, "Yeah, that book you keep and read all of the time." He said, "Oh I don't read this book. This book reads me." He was right. Throughout this year if you will go to the Word of God to begin each day, your day will not only be different; you will be different that day.

Let me encourage you to answer the question, where are you going, by determining that you are going to be a blessing to others. Get into the Word, get instructed, then go, and live out those instructions wherever you might be. People see us as Christians in worship as we hear the Word, as we go to Sunday School, attend church activities, and are involved in the instruction from the Lord. Then they see us in so many other places with actions that do not seem to reflect what we have heard. They hear us talk as though we have not been changed by the Lord. They see expressions of an attitude from us that obviously are not like Jesus. The real test of our faith is not so much the discussion in the Sunday School class but in the classroom during the week. Now you may not be in high school or college. What are you like where you have been placed by God in social settings and sometimes in the trying moments of life? Often our words and works do not match up. Sometimes the world can easily point to us and say that we are hypocritical in our faith. Sometimes we may be, and at other times, it is a matter of not letting the Lord have His way in us to bless others.

It is not going to be easy because most of us think that the world and everything therein revolves around us. We think

everything that is happening is about us and how it affects us. No, it is not! The Lord has put you here to be a blessing to others. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). He has put you here to be a blessing. There is somebody this very day that the Lord will point you toward so that you can be an incredible blessing from God.

A final thought is where are you going when your life is over? None of us will be here forever. During this year, many people will conclude their journey on earth and face eternity. Statistically on an average about 250,000 people die each day. Is that not amazing? So throughout the year globally millions will die. The Bible is so clear not only in telling us the destination of every person is either heaven or hell, but it is also clear in proclaiming that God wants every one of us to be saved. With God, there are no exclusions. There are no exceptions. He wants you to be ready to die. Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). He will not reject you. He will receive you, save you, and give you life everlasting.

How can you know Jesus? This very day can be the day that you come to Him. If you will confess that you are a sinner and call upon the name of the Lord, you will find that He is standing right there at your heart's door. He will forgive you. He will come to live with you. He will transform your life. He will make 2010 like no year that you have ever lived. If it were to be your last year on earth, you will then be going to be with Him forever and ever. You will be a part of God's forever family.

The year 2010 is here. We are on this journey together. Let God use you and bless you.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

HICKORY RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH, Florence, MS, is seeking a Youth Minister. Please forward resumes to Youth Minister Search Committee, 2300 Cleary Road, Florence, MS 39073, or shannon.craft4@gmail.com.

BREWER BAPTIST CHURCH, is seeking a P/T Youth and Children's Director that can help us prepare future leaders for an eternity, not just for today. Resumes will be received through February 28, 2010. Please send your resume to 24 Otho Sellers Rd., Richton, MS 39476 or email ynyministry@yahoo.com

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SMITHVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH IS seeking a bi-vocational Student Minister. Please submit your resume and DVD to: Smithville Baptist Church P. O. Box 52 Smithville, MS 38870

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Wrestling with Time

Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

By Tony Martin

Many will remember the Pete Seeger folk tune, Turn! Turn! Turn! Seeger wrote the song in 1959, recorded it in 1962, and it was covered by several artists, including The Byrds and Dolly Parton. The song was adapted directly from our focal passage with the exception of the last line of the lyrics. While the song itself was a folk anthem for world peace, the passage actually deals more with the notion of time itself.

Time is a precious commodity – something we try to control, but more often controls us. We are not just timekeepers; we are time-servers, slaves to our hectic schedules. There was a period in our history when if you were visiting relatives in a faraway town, and missed the stagecoach, it was

no big deal; another would be by in a month. Now, we go into an absolute lather if we're made to wait on anything. We regularly run out of time. Yet we need to remember that time never frustrates God. When things don't seem to happen at the right time for us, we must understand that the timing of God's plan is best. We are finite creatures of time, but God controls time.

Living in Time (Ecc. 3:1-8)

These first eight verses are set up as a study in contrasts: birth and death, planting and uprooting, weeping and laughing, and so forth. In these 14 statements, Solomon wants the reader to understand that God uses life events to accomplish His will in our lives. Much of this we have little control over, and Solomon states that God

predetermines all of life's activities, and to the extent that if we can give ourselves over to His watchcare in good and bad times, the more at peace we will be.

Life can be like a chemical compound. Take common table

salt, made up of sodium and chlorine. Separate, these two chemicals are nothing you'd want to put on food, but together, they are a proper seasoning. God, Who has a purpose in everything, takes all the disparate components of our lives and blends them to create a whole person. Knowing God is in total control is not fatalism. He does not rob us of freedom or responsibility.

Duane A. Garrett wrote: "Life is composed of joy and sorrow, building and destroying, and living and dying. Each comes at the proper time. This reminds us that we are creatures of time and not yet able to partake of the joys of eternity. No one can be happy who has not come to grips

with the reality that life is full of changes and sorrows as well as continuity and joy. We must accept that we are mortal and governed by time" (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, vol. 14, The New American Commentary, p. 298).

Looking for the Eternal (Ecc. 3:9-11)

God controls time and makes everything appropriate in its time. People, however, are unable to see the whole of God's plan for their lives.

In the earlier passage, Solomon looked at life "under the sun," and now brings God into the picture. Solomon begins by repeating in v. 9 his earlier question from 1:3 – paraphrased, "What does the worker gain from all his labor?" He couches this question against the backdrop of the temporal vs. the eternal. Solomon wants the reader to know that we cannot know the answer to all the mysteries of life. Since we were made for eternity, the "here and now" will never completely satisfy us. Verse 10 expresses how

man's life is a gift from God. If we embrace the notion that all of life is a gift – the good and the bad – and thank God for it, then we can better manage the trials that come our way. It is human nature to try to answer the "why's?" of life, but to dwell on those causes unnecessary burdens.

Standing in Awe of God (Ecc. 3:12-14)

Rather than being disillusioned because they cannot understand God's entire plan, Solomon suggested people enjoy the time they have and stand in awe of God. God has made us a part of his eternal plan. How could life possibly be meaningless and mundane? The proper attitude for us is to have a humble reverence of God, the same attitude of an obedient child toward a loving parent. If we fear God, we have no reason to fear anything else. We should take steps to discover and obey God's will for our lives daily.

Martin is Associate Editor of The Baptist Record.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Finding What You Need

Mark 8:11-13; 16-21; 27-33

By Malcolm Woody

Winds of change are blowing. You have followed the Galilean Miracle-worker for a year, and attitudes are changing. You saw Him supernaturally create food for over 5,000 people and those people attempted to make Jesus king by force (Jn 6:15). Then later many deserted Him after speaking of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (Jn 6:47-66). Popularity is beginning to turn toward opposition.

Today, after another feeding miracle involving over 4,000 people, Jesus arrives on the shores of Dalmanutha in the area of Magadan on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. You land at Dalmanutha in another boat, and some Pharisees begin arguing with Jesus. They are trying to test Him, pressing

for proof of His authority, requesting signs from heaven. Jesus is exasperated with them. He sighs deeply replying, "Why does this generation demand a sign? I assure you: No sign will be given to this generation!" (Mk 8:12 HCSB). Then Jesus boards a boat and crosses Galilee to the eastern shore.

As you follow, you consider His reply to the Pharisees. You have seen many miracles, and most of them involve faith or belief. The Pharisees in Dalmanutha didn't believe. They want proof to believe after the miracle, and Jesus appears to work miracles based on belief or faith prior to the miracle. You have seen Him deflect the miracle back on the person healed by saying, "Your faith has made you well." (Mk 5:34 HCSB). You understand that

Woody

heart hardened?" (Mk 8:17-18 NIV). He asks them how many baskets of food were left over after the feeding of the 5,000 and 4,000. The disciples know the number, but they don't get the message. You recognize that being a follower of Jesus requires great faith in Him and not the bread in the baskets.

Over the next few days and weeks you continue to follow the group as they head north. They leave the region of Galilee, crossing over into the pagan territory of Tyre and Phoenicia. As they reach the villages of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks, "Who do people say I am?" (Mk 8:27 NIV). Several of the disciples respond and list John the

Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asks, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" (Mk 8:29 NIV).

The one you know as Simon, who they call "Rock," answers, "You are the Christ (Mk 8:29)." This peaks your interest. Is He really the Anointed One, the long-awaited Messiah? This creates excitement and emotion that wells up in your heart almost tangibly. He warns those in earshot not to tell any one. You ask yourself, why? Why not tell everyone? Perhaps it has something to do with the faith you've already learned. Perhaps this means you can't tell anything to those who can't hear and show things to those who can't see. That must be it.

Then your thoughts are interrupted as He grows serious and speaks of the future. He explains that He will suffer many things, be rejected by the Jewish authorities, killed, and then something about rising again. You are confused and dumfounded at the news. How can this be? The Messiah is all powerful and will be restoring

the kingdom; death isn't supposed to be part of the plan. The disciples are just as wrought with anxiety.

You watch as Simon Peter takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke Him. This is hard to watch but very understandable. Simon tells Jesus the plan is wrong. A righteous indignation flashes through the eyes of Jesus, and He lashes out in reply, "Get behind me Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Mk 8:33 NIV).

It is too much to take. You turn away unsure if you want to keep following. You want to believe. Then a powerful thought blossoms in your mind: Faith is required. Everything over the past few weeks points to this truth. The Pharisees and their lack of faith is linked with the baskets and their message of faith and the answer to the question of who He is. Faith is what He is looking for from people. Faith is what you need.

Woody is a member of Broadmoor Church, Madison.

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

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News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Lucile Hilderbrand
SSC, Immanuel BC
Mr. C. R. Page
Ferrell's Home &
Outdoor, Inc.
Lewis Perkins
Dr. & Mrs. Dan Stringer
Kristopher Pitts
Diana & Michael Forrest
Mr. Joe Pounds
Central BC-Brandon
James Robert Putnam
Ms. Martha M. Putnam
John "Red" Reed
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Poag
Dr. Andy Reese
Dale & Sharon Hays
Dr. & Mrs. Anthony S. Kay
Ralph, Cheryl Leigh &
Mary Lynn Perkins
Mrs. B. L. Reeves
Ms. Barbina Jean Reeves
Loise Risher
Mrs. Virginia Ross
Christopher Rives
Mr. & Mrs. Charles R. Wilbanks
Clara Mae Roberts
Ms. Mary Martha Berry
Mrs. Polly Dale
Mr. Joseph Robison
Bovina BC-Vicksburg
Rod Rodgers
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Ervin Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. William H. Garrard III
Mrs. Thelma Ross
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Peeler
Bessie (Winstead) Rush
Mrs. Janeiro L. Cranage
John Hollis Saucier
Mr. & Mrs. R. B. Newman
Donna Schieber
Ms. Jayne Hust
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest C. Scruggs
Dr. Rebecca S. Wilkie
Dorothy Seale
Mrs. Carol J. Rather
Mr. J. H. (Jack) Sherard
Mr. & Mrs. James C. Brents Jr.
Samuel Shipley
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O. Crosthwait Jr.
Mr. Willie Shoemaker
T.E.L. SSC, Springfield
BC-Morton
Mrs. Virgie Sloan
Mrs. June P. House
Bryan & Nettie Smith
Miss Sarah Marie Smith
Mrs. Mildred Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan

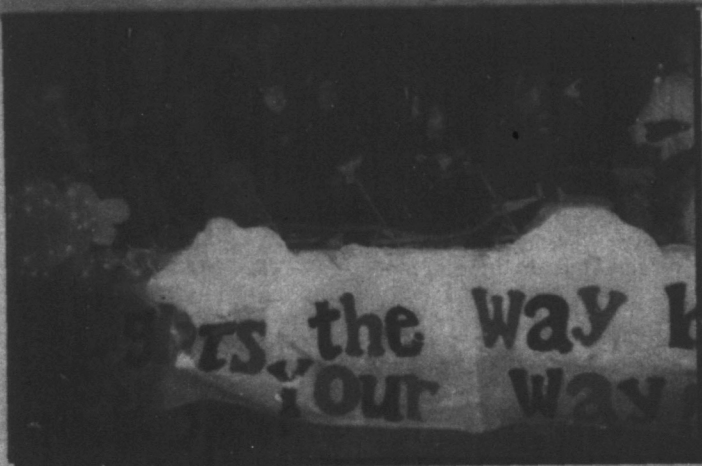
JUST FOR THE RECORD



5. Pearl River Association churches Christmas cantata



6. Everett and Phillipson



7. New Home Church, Fulton



8. Central Church, McNeill

1. First Church, Morton, will host Hosanna in concert Jan. 24, 6 p.m.

2. Brandon Church, Brandon, will host the winter gathering of Romanian-American Mission Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m., with a banquet and speakers. Tickets, \$12; call (601) 824-1781 for reservations.

3. Hurricane Creek Church, Marion County, hosted a Christmas dinner for ESL students and instructors recently. Over 100 people representing at least seven nationalities attended the event.

4. Grace Church, Vicksburg, received \$1869 toward their \$900 goal of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

5. The combined choirs of Pine Grove, New Henleyfield, and New Palestine Churches, all of Pearl River Association, presented the Christmas cantata Rise Up Dec. 13. Shown are the participants.

6. Branch Church, Morton, received a certificate honoring its 100th anniversary recently from the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission. Mike Everett, AMD, is shown presenting the certificate to pastor Timothy (Bobo) Phillipson.

7. The youth of New Home Church, Fulton, constructed and entered a Christmas parade float in the Fulton Christmas parade Dec. 6, winning second place. Shown are the float and participants.

8. The musicians of Central Church, McNeill, presented the musical Simple Gifts Dec. 13. Shown are the participants.

9. First Church, Cleveland, presented The Ornament Dec. 13. Shown are the participants.

10. Enterprise Church, Enterprise, took fall candy bags decorated with scripture verses to the children's floors in the area hospitals. Shown are the participants.

11. White Oak Church, Smith County Association, ordained Tony Taylor as deacon Nov. 8. Shown are pastor Leslie Trigg, Taylor, and Amy Taylor.

12. Main Street Church, Goodman, ordained Danny Robertson as deacon Dec. 13. Shown are pastor John W. Parker and Robertson.



9. First Church, Cleveland



10. Enterprise Church, Enterprise



11. Taylor ordination



12. Robertson ordination